

MICCO, "CHIEF" IN SEMINOLE LANGUAGE

Micco is one of Ralph Munroe's innovative "Presto-type" sailboats, which he first designed in the summer of 1885 while living in Staten Island.

Presto was a round bilged sharpie, something quite new in the sailing craft line. The New Haven Sharpie, a flat-bottomed and sided craft, which very light draft had at the time a great local reputation for speed and easy handling. However it lacked stability for sea going use and the flat bottom pounded heavily in a seaway.

Several builders had tried to make improvement on the New Haven Sharpie. "My attempt during construction, and even after launching met with no favorable comment whatever, but when ballasted and tried out, proved to be one of the most serviceable vessels I ever had to do with." Presto drew 27 inches of water and her creation was a direct result of Munroe's interests in south Florida, "where shoal waters put a great premium on extreme light draft."

Munroe parted with Presto after five years. At that time a larger boat was better suited to his needs. Micco was 50 feet overall and had a slightly greater beam than Presto. This gave her more windward speed and ability.

Launched in the fall of 1891, Micco was sailed south by the Commodore, Dick Carney, and Thomas and Ned Hine. The following year she made a run from Cape Florida to Sandy Hook in six and a half days, a record for boats in her class which stood for many years. In 1924 at age 33, Micco came in second in her class in the Bermuda Race.

"Two of the most famous figures in American yacht designing" were made honorary members of the Cruising Club of America in 1928. One was Nathaniel Hereshoff, "designer of the most famous racing yachts built in this country at the time," and the other was Commodore Ralph Munroe, "leading exponent of the shoal draft yacht for offshore work."

Many years later in 1973 Micco was still afloat in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. In 1974 the Historical Association of Southern Florida purchased her in trust for the State of Florida, and she ultimately came "home" to the Barnacle 83 years after her maiden voyage.

This year The Barnacle Society has been fundamental in obtaining a grant from the State of Florida, Bureau of Historic Preservation for the stabilization of Micco. The project will begin in the near future and will help prevent further deterioration of Micco. Contributions to this preservation effort will be gratefully accepted by The Barnacle Society, Inc., P.O. Box 330579, Coconut Grove, Florida 33233-0579